



**COURTENAY NEVILLE SMITHERS**

29 August 1925 – 12 May 2011

## COURTENAY SMITHERS MEMORIAL ISSUE

This special issue of the *Australian Entomologist* is dedicated to the life of Courtenay Neville Smithers, who passed away in Sydney at the age of 85 on May 12, 2011. He was a big, generous man whose life encompassed three continents and whose interests in entomology were just as broad. Our frontispiece portrait shows him as Deputy Director of the Australian Museum in 1968, a position he relinquished to return to hands-on entomology.

To explore his life we have four biographical pieces. Courtenay's wife (and collecting companion) Aletta, always known as Smila, touchingly tells the little-known story of his early life in Africa and England, and how his drive to study natural history evolved. David Britton, who now sits in Courtenay's old office at the Australian Museum, describes Courtenay's career at that institution, how he revamped the displays and brought entomology to the public in many ways. David also compiled the list of Smithers' patronyms and dug into AM archives for images of the camera-shy subject. Tim New, from La Trobe University, himself a psocid worker, describes Courtenay's prodigious output of research on this group of tiny insects which he had consciously chosen as a life-long study in Rhodesia in the early 1950s. John Peters, a British lepidopterist who came to Australia a year after Courtenay, describes his energetic attempts to record and explain the migratory patterns of Australian insects. John, a close friend of Courtenay's, also unearthed an unpublished manuscript of Courtenay's dealing with the uplift of butterflies into atmospheric thermals and the implications of this on movement of insects from Australia east into the Pacific. This is included.

The other seven papers are by friends and colleagues of Courtenay who dedicate their studies to his memory. Five of them name new species after Courtenay.

We thank all the authors for their contributions to this special volume. At 128 pages, it is the largest volume of the *Australian Entomologist* produced in its 38 years. This could not have been done without extra support. Thirty-seven subscribers gave almost \$1000 to help. Thank you all. Those who wished to be named are: R. Bashford, I. Endersby, S. Ginn, R. Grandison, C. Hood, T. Houston, J. King, R. Kohout, R. Lachlan, C. Lambkin, J. Majer, R. May, G. Maynard, G. Monteith, B. Moore, M. Moulds, K. Murray, G. Owen, J. Peters, L. Willan, J. Yates.

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